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AN OLD LONDON AUCTION

IN view of the results of recent art auctions in London, it is certainly of interest to note this report of one in the last century, from the *New Annual Register*. The contrast of prices over the lapse of a century is significant. The date of the report is June 7, 1786, and it says:

This day ended the sale of the noble museum of the late Duchess Dowager of Portland, which lately began at her Grace's house, in Privy Gardens, and lasted thirty-eight days. They were sold by auction by Mr. Skinner. Among the many curious articles were the following:

A very curious rosary, by Benevento Celini, said to be the rosary of Henrietta Maria, Queen of King Charles I, who, in her necessities, pawned it to the Duke of Orleans. It consists of six plum and fifty cherry stones; the first most curiously carved with parts of history, the latter with heads of emperors; and on the reverses emblems and mottoes. It was sold to Mr. Jones for £46 4s.

A most remarkable fine ditto, by ditto, said to have been the property of Pope Clement VII, consisting of thirty-two plum stones of exquisite workmanship of sculptures on both sides, in relieve; and between each stone is a pearl, thirty-two in number, with a larger one on the top of the tassel. It was sold to Mr. Randall for £18 18s.

A lock of the hair of Mary, Queen of France, daughter of Henry VII, taken from her corpse at St. Edmund's, Bury, 1784, by the late Sir J. Cullum, Bart. Sold for six guineas.

A fine piece of carving in wood, representing landscapes, with views, in which is introduced water with vessels sailing, and on land various representations of hunting with boar, flag, dogs, and men on horseback; the whole executed in a manner beyond description, and in the highest preservation. It was sold to Mr. Webb for £15 15s.

A small cameo of fine antique Mosaic, set in gold as a ring, and turns upon a swivel. The figure has wings and feet of a bird, with a human face, and seems to be a hieroglyphic. Sold to Mr. Townley for 12½ guineas.

A precious fragment of an antique intaglio, an exceedingly fine carnelian, set in gold for a ring. It represents Hercules as low as the waist sitting in a skiff, and a lion's skin for a sail; one of the paws is fastened by a string, which hangs over the head of Hercules, whose strength in neck and back is wonderfully expressed in so small a compass. It was sold to Mr. Jones for 45 guineas.

A cameo of the head of Augustus Cæsar, upon a remarkably fine onyx, the head white upon a jacinth ground, the workmanship of superlative excellence. It was found at Malta. Sold to Mr. Jones for 225 guineas.

The head of Jupiter Serapis, cut out of green basaltes, a most inimitable piece of sculpture of Egyptian workmanship, from the Barberini cabinet; the size about four inches. The countenance is highly expressive of sublimity and dignity, tempered with sweetness and grace. Sold to Mr. Humphries for 165 guineas.

The celebrated antique vase, or sepulchral urn, from the Barberini cabinet at Rome. It is said to have been the identical urn which contained the ashes of the Roman emperor, Alexander Severus, and his mother, Mammea, which was deposited in the earth about the year 235 after Christ, and was dug up by the order of Pope Barberini, named Urban VIII, between the years 1623 and 1644. The materials of which it is composed emulate an onyx, the ground a rich transparent dark amethystine color, and the snowy figures which adorn it are in bas relief, of workmanship above all encomium, and such as cannot but excite the highest idea of the skill of the ancients; the dimensions 9¾ inches high, and 21¾ in circumference. It was sold to the Duke of Marlborough for £1,039.

The collection of Hollar's works in thirteen volumes consisting of the most beautiful impressions of many scarce etchings, including many unedited drawings by that celebrated master, £385.

Eighteen drawings of Hollar's, in one lot, sold for 20 guineas.

Two miniatures of Sir Walter Raleigh, and his son, Capt. Walter Raleigh, £44.

A portrait of the Duchess de la Valière, by Petitot, £84.

Two miniatures of Milton and his mother, £34.

A fine miniature head of Christ, by Isaac Oliver, 20 guineas.

Queen Elizabeth's little Prayer Book, containing six prayers composed by Her Majesty, and written by her own hand in the neatest and most beautiful manner on vellum, two in English, the other four in Latin, Greek, Italian and French. On the inside of the cover her own portrait and that of the Duke of Alençon; the binding black shagreen, with enameled clasps, and in the centre of each a ruby. It sold for 100 guineas.

A very fine illuminated missal, presented by the Duchess of Bedford, sister to the Duke of Burgundy, and wife of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, to Henry VI, 1430, with original portraits of the Duke of Bedford (engraved among Houbraken's illustrious heads) and his wife Anne, Duchess of Burgundy, and her deed of gift to the king, bound in crimson velvet, with gold clasps, on which are engraved the arms of Haeley, Cavendish and Holles, quarterly—Mr. Edwards, £213.

A most beautiful missal, six inches by four, illuminated by Julio Clovio, in the highest state of preservation, inscribed by him to the Duke of Alençon, purchased by Edward, Earl of Oxford, from the Arundelian collection, with gold plates, covers and clasps. It sold for £168.

The whole amount of the sale was £11,524 4s.

THE FRINK SYSTEM IN CHICAGO

I RECENTLY mentioned the likelihood that the art section of the World's Fair at Chicago would be lighted by the Frink system of reflectors—the only system I am acquainted with which would be adequate to this important purpose. I have studied the various methods of lighting picture galleries for a number of years, and have on occasions experimented in that direction myself; and under no other system than the Frink have I found it possible to avoid those numerous drawbacks in the reflection and refraction of light by which pictures suffer so much under artificial illumination. In view of the vast preparations for the art exhibit at the Chicago Fair, therefore, it struck me as a matter of the first importance, both in justice to the exhibitors and for the benefit of the public, that the managers should give especial attention to this important feature of their galleries.

I now learn that the Frink system has been finally adopted by Mr. D. H. Burnham, Chief of Construction of the Exposition, for use in all the seventy-eight galleries of the fine arts. The award was, moreover, made upon the tested merit of the system. Mr. James W. Ellsworth, who owns one of the finest private collections in Chicago, is Chairman of the Art Committee, and his two private galleries have been fitted with the Frink reflectors. Their practical application, with completely successful results, led him to recommend their adoption for the department of the Exposition in which he was specially interested, and in his endorsement of them to the architect he wrote:

"After thorough investigation of the lighting, by artificial light of picture galleries in New York, I have convinced myself that there is but one method of reflectors which gives absolute satisfaction, in connection with which, I believe, there is nothing to be desired, and which is absolutely perfect. This is the Frink system of reflection. I have ordered them for my own gallery here, and have spoken of them in connection with the Art Institute galleries now being constructed, and I desire, as one of the members of the Art Committee (and will obtain the endorsement of the entire committee to this), that it should be used in the galleries of the Exposition grounds. I feel so great an interest, as do Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Ives and others of our committee, respecting the lighting of the pictures when in place there, that I trust there may be no question but that the Frink reflectors may be used. I have talked this matter over very fully with the Frink people, in the interest of the Exposition, and as to results they will give you every guarantee necessary, providing you may have any question in your mind relative to the latter point."

Messrs. Charles L. Hutchinson and Halsey C. Ives furnished emphatic endorsements of Mr. Ellsworth's commendation, and the adoption of the system followed soon after. The artists who exhibit at the Fair, therefore, the collectors who loan works for exhibition, and the visitors to the galleries, may congratulate themselves that the beauty of the display will not be marred by bungling devices or insufficient contrivances under which it otherwise might suffer.

M. Henri de Morgan has been excavating on the site of Memphis, and has unearthed several broken statues of Rameses II and two gigantic standing figures of Pthah of the Glorious Countenance, dedicated to that Memphian god by the same king. These figures are wrapped in mummy cloths and hold sceptres in their closed hands. Another find, and a rare one, is a granite bark of the dead like the one in the Turin Museum, but lacking the effigies of rowers and mourners.

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William Strang, the Scotchman whose etchings were shown last year at the Wunderlich Gallery, has published with Elkin Mathews and John Lane, of London, a book of verse written and illustrated by himself. It is called "The Earth Fiend," and tells of a farmer whose crops are devastated by a goblin and who at last overtakes and conquers the latter. The "lubber-fiend" works so hard for his conqueror that the farmer gets rich and careless, so one day his slave takes him unawares and breaks his neck. Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse in the *Academy* speaks very highly of the etchings, especially of that one which shows the earth fiend asleep in the fields.